

INVESTING IN PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT SURVIVORS

(Ms. LEE of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1620, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act. I am proud to cosponsor this bill, and I want to thank Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE and Chairman JERRY NADLER for, once again, their leadership and bold efforts to bring this bill to the floor.

This reauthorization bill builds upon the landmark 1994 legislation by expanding protections and services for survivors, while also working to prevent violence from occurring in the first place. It makes vital investments in preventing sexual assaults and stalking and increases victims' access to safe housing and economic stability. It also increases funding of programs for culturally specific services.

An estimated one in three women experience domestic violence in this country. I personally know what strong and consistent support means to emerge as a survivor.

When I was in the California State Legislature, I authored the Violence Against Women Act for the State of California. And today, I am so proud, along with Congresswoman JACKSON LEE, that we passed the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act with bipartisan support. When I was in the California State Legislature, a Republican Governor signed my bill into law, so I thank the gentlewoman very much for her leadership.

COOPERATE WITH CENTRAL AMERICA'S NORTHERN TRIANGLE

(Mr. FORTENBERRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Mr. Speaker, a hallmark of America is that we have opened our arms and have been a just and generous nation to people who are fleeing political violence elsewhere, who have been persecuted in their native lands, and who are coming here to seek a better way of life. But here is the problem, Mr. Speaker: chaos and disorder at our border undermine the ability of our country to extend that generosity.

A little-known fact about all of this is that for many years we have been working to get this question off of the one-yard line. But here we are again, seeing the trauma of unaccompanied children at our border and people receiving the wrong message that they can simply come here.

We spent hundreds of millions of dollars in the Northern Triangle countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras to try to rebuild the conditions for the rule of law, to stop crime, and to give people economic opportunity. That is the right policy, and we had co-

operative agreements with those countries to begin to halt the messaging that it is proper or appropriate to come here illegally. Of course, this feeds human trafficking and children being left alone.

It is unjust. We need to return to the previous policy in which we are cooperating with those countries.

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate and commemorate this historic month, Women's History Month, and to celebrate the passing in the House of the equal rights amendment, as well as VAWA, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act, H.R. 1620.

How grateful I am that this bill, H.R. 1620, addresses the need of sex trafficking victims while creating a demonstration program on trauma-informed training for law enforcement. It increases access to grant programs for culturally specific organizations and ensures culturally specific organizations are included in the development of programs.

It is supported by the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women, a coalition of over 200 groups.

VAWA expired on September 30, 2018. We, as a body, are called upon by survivors to do our job. I am delighted to celebrate ANN KUSTER, GWEN MOORE, JACKIE SPEIER, BRENDA LAWRENCE, LOIS FRANKEL, DEBBIE DINGELL, and KAREN BASS, and the name of Sojourner Truth, the abolitionist suffragist, and Ivalita Jackson, my mother, a modern-day abolitionist and suffragist. They know that to get the job done, we must get the job done.

This bill is on to the other body, and now it is to be signed by the President of the United States. It is catapulted in Women's History Month. We celebrate ERA and the Violence Against Women Act.

PROTECTING ALL AMERICANS FROM VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

(Ms. STEVENS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. STEVENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bipartisan bill to protect Americans from violence and abuse and to ensure that survivors of domestic abuse have access to the services they need.

I rise in support of a single mom hiding in a shelter with her two children. I rise in support of a mother looking to flee an abusive marriage with her children covered in disinfectant chemicals. These are the conversations I have had with women in my district, in Michigan 11.

The Violence Against Women Act reauthorizes funding for a variety of crit-

ical grant programs, including for victim services, prevention, training, education, enforcement, economic stability, and on.

Two years ago, Mr. Speaker, I walked with my colleagues over to the Senate majority leader's office to demand a vote on this reauthorization, and he refused to see us. He refused to even allow a vote.

Today, Mr. Speaker, as I rise, I look forward to working with a new Senate majority leader and a new President who will commit to protecting all Americans from violence in the household.

PROVIDING EQUAL PROTECTION FOR ALL

(Mr. CASTEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, during my first month in Congress, I visited Family Shelter Service, an organization that provides lifesaving counseling, victim protection, and a 24/7 hotline to women and children in northern Illinois. They provide nearly 11,000 nights of shelter for abused women and children every year.

To their staff, to their clients, and to the one in three women in the United States who experience domestic violence and the one in five women who are raped, the Violence Against Women Act has been a lifeline since 1994. But it needs to be updated and renewed, and that is what we have done today.

The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 makes crucial updates to this landmark bill to address its gaps, expand protections, and meet increased needs. We have expanded protections to make the law more inclusive of our LGBT communities. We have closed loopholes to better protect victims from gun violence, improved victim services to help survivors heal and access justice, and increased funding for programs to help children who are exposed to domestic violence in the home.

We have made vital new investments in prevention and victim services, including an amendment that I introduced to train healthcare providers on college campuses so they can better meet the needs of the one in four undergraduate women who are victims of sexual assault.

This is for our mothers, our sisters, our daughters, and our friends. But it is also for Americans, regardless of their gender, who aspire to live in a country that truly provides equal protection and equal opportunities for all.

We have done our work here today. It is now crucial that the Senate do theirs and send this bill to the President's desk.

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CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include material on the subject of my Special Order in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, as a co-chair of the Democratic Women's Caucus, I am pleased to lead this Special Order in celebration of Women's History Month. Throughout March, we recognize the women leaders, trailblazers, and pioneers who come before us.

We have chartered a path forward that will lift up and empower young women and girls. The soul and moral compass of our Nation rests on the shoulders of women throughout this history.

I am proud to fight every day so that we can improve the quality of life for women and girls in Michigan and across this country.

As the co-chair of the Democratic Women's Caucus and the vice chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, I have made it a mission to put women issues and Black women issues front and center in this Congress.

But before I go into the work that we have done and are doing in this Chamber, I want to recognize the inspirational women in my life who helped shape who I am.

First, I want to acknowledge my grandmother, who, without a high school education, taught me the value of education, taught me the value of being a woman, of being a wife, of being a mother. She is my rock and my foundation. She taught me that being a woman and being a Black woman in America "is to be fearless, Brenda," to never apologize, and be accountable for everything that I do, and that I work hard, get my education, and keep my faith in God. There was no door I could not walk through or no table that I did not deserve to sit at. She had strength and confidence in something I carry with me every single day.

Then there is my shero, Shirley Chisholm, who paved the way for Black women like me to be in Congress. She proved every day the power that women had to change their community. Shirley Chisholm always said: "If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair."

And, my goodness, the majority of women who represent us here in Congress are carrying their own folding chair.

So we have our first woman, our first Black American, our first Asian-American Vice President, who has coined the phrase: "The first, but not the last."

We stand on the shoulders, all of us, of giants. We continue to build the foundation so that the next generation of girls and young women can stand on our shoulders. Look at this Congress. There are over 140 Democrat and Republican women in the House and the Senate, the most ever in the history of our country.

That translates to the work we are doing in this Chamber to better the lives of women and girls. If you look at today, we voted to pass the equal rights amendment resolution and the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act. These are the steps in the right direction. We have come a long way, baby, for full equality, but we still have work to do.

We, unfortunately, have a system in America that often suppress women and does not support women. But we know that, "A woman is like a tea bag," like Eleanor Roosevelt said, "you never know how strong she is until she gets in hot water."

And I know for a fact that women have continued to stand up against every barrier. You point to this pandemic and you see how women, especially women of color, have borne the brunt of this health and economic crisis. But we keep moving and we will continue in this Congress to fight for the women in America.

This is our responsibility, and I am glad that we have women leaders across the Federal, State, and local governments that we have looked up to. Every woman in this Congress today recognizes that the next generation is looking at us and asking us to stand up.

Our Vice President of the United States, our Speaker of the House, and half of President Biden's Cabinet, and even on the other side of the aisle, the chair of the House Republican Party, all are women. We are making success, and I know that we can do so much more.

I continue to work, and I want to know that when women succeed, America succeeds, as our amazing Speaker of the House reminds us.

I am so glad to share this hour with some of our amazing women leaders who will continue to tell us, while we have a month dedicated to women's history, we make history every single day.

I would like to ask for my first speaker to come to the podium.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER).

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, my friend, my colleague, my co-chair of the Democratic Women's Caucus.

I rise tonight in honor of Women's History Month and the heroic, trailblazing women of our military, who have risked their lives for our country

in the advancement of women's equity and equality.

Women have been on the front lines fighting for America's values and freedom since the founding of our Nation. Our foremothers blazed a trail for women like Loretta Walsh, who, in 1917, as America teetered on the brink of entering World War I, heard and answered the call to serve. Loretta became the first woman to enlist in the U.S. military in a position other than nursing and was our first female chief petty officer.

I also want to recognize Captain Kristen Griest and Lieutenant Shaye Haver, the first women to graduate from the Army Ranger School; Marcella Hayes, America's first Black female fighter pilot; and Mary Edward Walker, the first female U.S. Army surgeon who served in the Civil War and the only woman to receive the Presidential Medal of Honor.

The strength and courage of these women and so many more like them reinforces what we already know: There is nothing women cannot do.

When women are in positions of leadership, our country is in better hands. I believe that this is especially true in our military.

I honor General Ann E. Dunwoody, our Nation's first female four-star general; Admiral Michelle Howard, the Navy's first female four-star admiral and first African American to command a U.S. naval ship; and Air Force General Laura Richardson, the first female commander of a combatant command.

These women have served our Nation honorably. They now must open new doors for a generation of women to fulfill their dreams to serve our country under safe conditions, free from sexual assault and harassment.

All of these women warriors volunteered for duty and risked their lives while fighting rampant misogyny, including attacks from talking heads on national TV—who have never served our country—and racism for the women of color. Their unflinching courage has paved the way for thousands of women serving in our Armed Forces today. Our military is stronger and this country is safer because women serve.

We honor these military women's achievements today on the House floor. May we never forget their sacrifice, duty, and dedication. May they elevate a new generation of women in the military, free from bias, racial discrimination, and sexual assault.

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my amazing co-chair for everything she does.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ).

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I rise today to honor our foremothers who first demanded equity in and outside the home, along with the sheroes